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REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above referenced application in view of the enclosed amendments and remarks is requested. Claims 1-2, 4-10, 12-17, 21, and 23-25 remain in the application.

ARGUMENT

According to the final Office action, claims 1, 3, 9, 11, 17, 19, 22, 24 and 25 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ludwig et al., Patent Application Publication US 2001/0021928 A1 (hereinafter Ludwig) in view of Crawford et al., US Patent 6,502,113 (hereinafter Crawford).

The final Office action dated July 15, 2004 rejects claims 1, 3, 9, 11, 17, 19, 22, 24, and 25. This rejection is stated in the Office Action Summary at line 6, page 1, and in the claim rejections section under 35 USC 103 on page 3. The Office action incorrectly lists the pending claims in the Office Action Summary as 1, 3, 9, 11, 17, 19, 22, 24, and 25. However, the correct set of pending claims includes several dependent claims that are not listed above. The correct set of pending claims is 1-2, 4-10, 12-17, 21, and 23-25. Claims 3, 11, 18-20, and 22 have previously been cancelled. Claims 2, 4-8, 10, 12-16, 21, 23 are not rejected. Furthermore, these claims are not addressed in the Office action at all. The PTO has not fulfilled its burden in examining these claims. Therefore, these claims are allowable, and an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

In particular, the limitations of claims 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 (and similar limitations in other dependent claims), are not taught or suggested by the cited art. The combination of Ludwig and Crawford does not teach or suggest the use of an archive agent to store the electronic contract, registering with a purchase/subscribe agent, distributing the contract according to a publish and subscribe model, terminating the electronic contract by modifying it to halt authorization of the shared business process, and cross-checking each other's digital signatures without using a trusted third party. Hence, these claims are allowable.

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If the Examiner persists in rejecting claims 2, 4-8, 10, 12-16, 21, 23, the Applicant requests a detailed explanation as to where the limitations of these claims are taught or suggested in the cited art. Without more, these claims are allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Claims 1-2, 4-10, 12-17, 21, and 23-25 are all in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (503) 264-8074. Early issuance of Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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